

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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R 051642Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8009

INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

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EO 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: MILGOV REACTION TO RECENT DISTURBANCES IN
SOUTHERN PERU AND PROSPECT OF FUTURE PROTESTS

REF: LIMA 8727 AND 8676

SUMMARY: THE MILGOV'S REACTION TO THE PAST MONTH'S
POPULAR DISTURBANCES IN SOUTHERN PERU HAS BEEN ONE
OF FIRMNESS COMBINED WITH RESTRAINT. MILGOV AND ITS MOSCOW-LINE
COMMUNIST ALLIES HAVE ATTEMPTED TO LUMP PROTESTERS OF THE
LEFT AND RIGHT INTO A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY CONSPIRACY
WITH CIA COLLUSION. THOUGH THERE IS NO GOOD EVIDENCE OF
A LEFT-RIGHT CONSPIRACY, BOTH PROTEST GROUPS SEE THEIR
INTERESTS FURTHERED BY ANTI-MILGOV DISTURBANCES. FORTH-
COMING PRICE INCREASES MAY WELL RESULT IN FURTHER VIOLENT
PROTESTS AND EVENTUALLY PRODUCE TOUGHER MILGOV REPRESSION.
IF THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION THEREBY DEPARTS FROM ITS CURRENT
NON-VIOLENT COURSE, BOTH ITS LEADERS AND ITS DIRECTION
COULD BE CHANGED.

1. THE POLITICAL CRISIS WHICH REACHED THE STAGE OF A POPULAR
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REBELLION IN SOME PARTS OF SOUTHERN PERU DURING THE PAST

MONTH SEEMS TO HAVE SUBSIDED. THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT SOUTHERN DEPARTMENTS (AREQUIPA, CUZCO AND PUNO) ARE QUIET WITH CURFEW HOURS REDUCED, THOUGH THE COUNTRY'S PRINCIPAL COPPER COMPLEX (TOQUEPALA-ILO) IS ON STRIKE.

2. THE GOVERNMENT RESTORED PUBLIC ORDER FORCEFULLY IN SOUTHERN PERU BUT EXHIBITED MODERATION (AND SOME COMPROMISE IN AREQUIPA) WHILE NOT YIELDING ON BASIC ISSUES. MOST OF THE ARRESTED SUTEP TEACHER LEADERS ARE STILL CONFINED, A RELATIVE HANDFUL OF THOSE FIRED HAVE BEEN RE-HIRED, AND THE DEPORTEES HAVE NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO RETURN. STILL, ONLY FIVE DEMONSTRATORS WERE KILLED IN THE EXTENSIVE BUT SPORADIC RIOTING (PLUS TWO IN THE NORTH), ALMOST ALL THOSE ARRESTED DURING THE RIOTS WERE RELEASED WITHIN A FEW HOURS OR DAYS, AND THERE HAS BEEN NO SUBSEQUENT ROUND-UP OF PROTEST LEADERS.

3. THE POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE RADICAL LEFTIST-LED DISTURBANCES HELPED CONFIRM THE MILGOV'S CONTINUING LACK OF POPULAR SUPPORT. HOWEVER, THE MILGOV AND ITS PCP (MOSCOW) SUPPORTERS FROM THE BEGINNING PUSHED THE CONSPIRACY THEORY. A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE OF APRA, THE ULTRA-LEFT AND THE CIA WAS SAID TO BE COORDINATING THE PROTESTS. WITH ONE KNOWN EXCEPTION (THE MILITARY COMMANDER OF CUZCO), OFFICIAL GOP SPOKESMEN USED A EUPHEMISM SUCH AS "CENTERS OF IMPERIALIST ESPIONAGE" INSTEAD OF CIA, BUT PRO-MILGOV MEDIA OFTEN SPELLED IT OUT. DESPITE THIS PROPAGANDA BARRAGE, WE DOUBT THAT MANY MILGOV LEADERS SERIOUSLY BELIEVE THAT EITHER THE CIA OR APRA PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE DISTURBANCES. BUT THE ATTACKS OF THE MAOISTS, TROTSKYITES AND OTHER RADICAL INDEPENDENT LEFTISTS THREATENED THE REGIME'S REVOLUTIONARY IMAGE AND THE TRADITIONAL CONSTITUENCY OF THE PCP (MOSCOW). BY LABELING THE FAR LEFT AS COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES IN ALLIANCE WITH THE LEFT'S TRADITIONAL DEVILS (APRA AND THE CIA), THE MILGOV AND THE PCP PRESUMABLY HOPED TO UNDERCUT THE DISSIDENT LEFT-RADICALS.

4. EVEN THOUGH NO LEFT-RIGHT CONSPIRACY SEEMS TO HAVE OCCURED IN THESE RECENT PROTESTS DERIVING FROM THE ARREST OF LEFTIST TEACHER UNION LEADERS, A COMMUNITY OF INTEREST EXISTS IN TAKING ADVANTAGE OF EVEN MORE UNPOPULAR MILGOV

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ACTS BELIEVED PENDING. THE SPURT IN THE ALREADY SERIOUS INFLATION WHICH WILL RESULT FROM ANTICIPATED FORTHCOMING INCREASES IN THE CONTROLLED AND SUBSIDIZED PRICES OF PETROLEUM AND WHEAT SHOULD PROVIDE THE NEXT IMPETUS FOR ANTI-MILGOV DEMONSTRATIONS AND VIOLENCE, PARTICULARLY IF EXISTING GRIEVANCES SUCH AS THE TEACHER LEADER ARRESTS AND DEPORTATIONS REMAIN UNRESOLVED. AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN EXTREME LEFT AND RIGHT IS UNNECESSARY IF BOTH FEEL THAT VIOLENT PROTEST SERVES THEIR

INTERESTS. FROM WHAT WE UNDERSTAND, THAT IS THE CASE. THE NON-MOSCOW RADICAL LEFT HOPES EITHER TO FORCE FURTHER RADICALIZATION OF THE MILITARY, TO CREATE CHAOS FROM WHICH A LEFT-RADICAL CIVILIAN REGIME WILL EMERGE, OR TO FORCE EXTREME REPRESSION BY MILGOV WHICH WOULD ENCOURAGE EVENTUAL VIOLENT LEFTIST REVOLUTION. THE RIGHT AND CENTER, INCREASINGLY DISTURBED BY THE MILGOV-PCP ALLIANCE, THE PROGRESS TOWARD SOCIALISM, AND REPRESSION OF MODERATE DISSENT AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE FORCED EXILE OF RAYMUNDO DUHARTE, PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY OF INDUSTRIES (PERU'S EQUIVALENT OF THE NAM), WANT TO EMBARRASS AND DISCREDIT THE RADICAL LEADERSHIP OF VELASCO SO AS TO ENCOURAGE MODERATE OR CONSERVATIVE MILITARY ELEMENTS TO TAKE POWER AND (EVENTUALLY) RETURN THE COUNTRY TO DEMOCRATIC CIVILIAN RULE.

5. GIVEN THE MILGOV'S CONTINUED FAILURE TO BUILD POPULAR SUPPORT, THE COMMUNITY OF INTEREST IN ENCOURAGING VIOLENT PROTEST, AND THE FORTHCOMING ISSUES ON WHICH PROTEST CAN BE BASED, WE SEE EVERY LIKELIHOOD THAT THE DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE PAST MONTH IN SOUTHERN PERU WILL BE RENEWED AND INTENSIFIED WHEN THE NEXT PRETEXT ARISES. THE REGIME WILL PROBABLY RESPOND BY GRADUALLY ESCALATING THE LEVEL OF REPRESSION. IF ESCALATION AND COUNTERACTION LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT VIOLENCE, THE MILITARY HIERARCHY COULD DECIDE THAT IT IS TIME TO CHANGE THE COMMAND AND DIRECTION OF THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION.

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